

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3489

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EPAP, EAGR, CS

SUBJECT: 1976 MEAT IMPORT PROGRAM

1. ACTING FONMIN VICTOR HUGO ROMAN CALLED IN CHARGE AND THE ECON OFFICER APRIL 9 FOR A FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED 1976 MEAT IMPORT AGREEMENT. ROMAN HAD RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM AMBASSADOR SILVA IN WASHINGTON REPORTING A CONVERSATION IN WHICH DEPUTY ASST. SECRETARY JULIUS KATZ HAD INFORMED HIM OF THE FIRM OPPOSITION OF AUSTRALIA TO INCLUSION IN THE 1976 VRS AGREEMENTS OF A REGIONAL REALLOCATION FORMULA.

2. ROMAN EMPHASIZED THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE MEAT PROBLEM FOR COSTA RICA, ESTIMATING THAT THERE WOULD BE A SURPLUS EXPORT AVAILABILITY OF 12 TO 15 MILLION POUNDS ABOVE THE ALLOCATION PROPOSED IN THE AGREEMENT. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS RELYING STRONGLY ON THE PROPOSED REGIONAL REALLOCATION TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE PREDICAMENT, AND THAT HIS REPORTS INDICATE THAT THERE WILL INDEED BE SHORTFALLS IN THE AREA THAT COULD BE REALLOCATED TO COSTA RICA. ROMAN STATED THAT THE CATTLE AND MEAT PACKING INDUSTRIES WERE INFORMED

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ABOUT THE FAVORABLE RECEPTION THAT THE REGIONAL

REALLOCATION PROPOSAL RECEIVED WHEN PRESIDENT ODUBER AND FONMIN FACIO DISCUSSED IT WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER, AND THAT THEY WERE SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED, BASED ON INFORMATION FROM THE EMBASSY'S AIDE MEMOIRE OF MARCH 4, 1976, THAT THE U.S. WOULD INCLUDE THE REGIONAL REALLOCATION FORMULA IN THE 1976 AGREEMENTS (THE EMBASSY'S AIDE MEMOIRE BASED ON AN INSTRUCTION FROM THE DEPARTMENT SAID, "A NEW PROVISION IN THE PROGRAM THIS YEAR, WHICH COULD BE OF GREAT POTENTIAL BENEFIT TO COSTA RICA, PROVIDES FOR INITIAL REALLOCATION OF SHORTFALLS WITHIN THE LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN REGION. ONLY IF SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES ARE NOT AVAILABLE WITHIN THAT REGION WOULD SHORTFALLS BE REALLOCATED OUTSIDE OF THE REGION."

3. CLEARLY, THE COSTA RICANS MAY ARGUE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN A COMMITMENT THAT REGIONAL REALLOCATION WILL BE USED THIS YEAR TO HELP THEM WITH THEIR MEAT SURPLUS PROBLEM. HOWEVER, IT WAS EQUALLY CLEAR THAT ROMAN DID NOT WISH TO PUT THE ISSUE AT THIS TIME IN TERMS OF HOLDING US TO A COMMITMENT, BUT RATHER TO EMPHASIZE THE HEMISPHERIC RELATIONSHIP AND THE STRONG RATIONALE FOR CARRYING OUT REALLOCATIONS WITHIN THE REGION. ROMAN EXPRESSED FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE USG IN ATTEMPTING TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENTS WITH ALL SIGNATORY COUNTRIES WHICH WOULD MAKE SPECIFIC PROVISION FOR REGIONAL REALLOCATION. HIS AMBASSADOR HAD REPORTED THAT A POSSIBLE SOLUTION MIGHT BE TO AVOID MENTIONING ANY FORMULA FOR REALLOCATION IN THE 1976 AGREEMENTS, THEREBY LEAVING THE U.S. FREE TO MAKE REALLOCATIONS BASED ON WHATEVER CRITERIA IT THOUGHT APPROPRIATE. ROMAN IMPLIED THAT SUCH A SOLUTION WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO COSTA RICA AS IT WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE U.S. TO CARRY OUT A REALLOCATION WITHIN THE REGION.

4. ROMAN SAID THAT IT IS PROBABLE THAT THE MEAT ISSUE WILL ALSO BE RAISED AGAIN WITH THE DEPARTMENT BY AMBASSADOR SILVA.
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